

questions asked. That's because the law permits some sellers—one-quarter to one-half of the vendors at a typical gun show—to skip the background checks required by Brady. That is a significant loophole. It's wide enough that criminals reach right through it, grabbing, collectively, thousands of firearms that disappear without a trace.

Last fall I asked the Secretary of the Treasury and the Attorney General to report on the problem and to come up with solutions. I now have their report. It is sensible and sobering. It shows conclusively that gun shows are a forum for gun traffickers, a cash-and-carry convenience store for weapons used to maim and kill.

We must close this loophole. America cannot allow its gun shows to become illegal arms bazaars, where lawbreakers shop side-by-side with the law-abiding. That's why I strongly support the recommendations of Secretary Rubin and Attorney General Reno. We should extend Brady checks and gun-tracing records to any and all open markets where large numbers of firearms are sold. And we should vigorously and fairly enforce the rules. The gun lobby may not want to hear this, but clearly it's the right thing to do.

No background check, no gun. No exceptions.

To toughen enforcement of the existing law, my balanced budget includes new funds to hire more than 100 agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. These agents will help arrest violent criminals and gun traffickers, and will shut down illegal purchases of firearms. My budget also increases funding for firearms prosecutions and expands our successful efforts to keep guns out of the hands of violent youth.

In these efforts, I am thankful for the leadership of Senator Lautenberg, and Congressman Blagojevich, who will introduce legislation to make this gun show policy the law of the land. I'm joined today by Senator Lautenberg, along with Senator Dick Durbin from Illinois, and Congresswomen Julia Carson from Indiana, as well as Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder. I thank them all for their support.

I'm looking forward to working with members of both parties in the coming months,

so that together we can strengthen the laws that serve us so well, and in doing so, build a stronger America for the 21st century.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:05 p.m. on February 5 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 6. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 5 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on Assistance to Jordan

February 6, 1999

At this difficult time, my thoughts and prayers, as well as those of all Americans, are with His Majesty King Hussein, his family, and the people of Jordan. The United States stands by Jordan and is determined to do all that it can to support and strengthen it.

Next week I will ask Congress promptly to provide the \$300 million in supplemental bilateral assistance to Jordan that was promised as part of the Wye agreement.

The United States is working with the international community to mobilize additional resources to help Jordan maintain its economic stability. We are consulting with key allies, including our G-7 partners and the Gulf States, on further steps to support Jordan.

The International Monetary Fund will play a leading role in marshaling international support for Jordan. Substantial resources can be mobilized quickly under a new IMF program with expedited procedures.

The World Bank also is preparing to provide additional support for Jordan's economic reform program.

In addition, the United States will support substantial rescheduling of Jordan's obligations to bilateral creditors through the Paris Club on the basis of an IMF program.

These initiatives by the international community, combined with U.S. direct bilateral assistance, will provide substantial resources in support of Jordanian economic stability and growth.

Statement on the Death of King Hussein I of Jordan

February 7, 1999

Hillary and I are deeply saddened by the news that King Hussein of Jordan has passed away. I had prayed this day would not come soon. But God has called King Hussein to his reward. The prayers of all Americans go out to the royal family and the Jordanian people.

No words can convey what King Hussein meant to the people he led for nearly half a century. Words cannot convey what he meant to me as a friend and inspiration. Through good times and bad, through health and illness, he showed the power of a strong will applied to a worthy cause. It takes a rare kind of courage to be a peacemaker—the courage to learn from the past and imagine a better future. When peace finally comes to the Middle East, his name will be inscribed upon it. That day, King Hussein will smile on us one more time.

I had the honor of seeing him just a few weeks ago, as he was about to return home. There was no hint of the struggle he was waging. Instead, he spoke with his usual passion and humanity about Jordan's well-being, the future of the Arab world, the Palestinian cause, and peace with Israel.

To Queen Noor, to Crown Prince Abdullah, to the King's family, and to the people of Jordan, Hillary and I send our condolences. The United States stands with you—today, tomorrow, and in the future. I ask all Americans to remember this good man and his family.

Remarks on the Death of King Hussein I of Jordan

February 7, 1999

Today the world mourns the loss of one of its great leaders, King Hussein of Jordan. I mourn the loss of a partner and friend. He was a magnificent man, and like so many, I loved and admired him.

King Hussein once wrote, "I believe we must live with courage and will. I must do so because, regardless of any difficulties I

face, when the time comes for me to lose my life, I would at least have done my best."

He did far better than that. A humble man and a king; a leader whose nobility came not from his title but his character; a man who believed that we are all God's children, bound to live together in mutual respect and tolerance.

King Hussein was ennobled. Many times his life was threatened, but each brush with mortality ennobled him. He learned that God only gives us a limited number of opportunities and that we must make the most of them. Surely, he did.

As he survived, Jordan survived. He grew in wisdom, and so did Jordan. He grew in stature, and so did Jordan. He won the respect and admiration of the entire world, and so did his beloved Jordan.

We remember his voice, each word slowly said, followed by a pause, a moment for silent reflection, as if he were reminding us that it is wise to think before we speak, to speak before we act. His manner was as strong and calming as his message.

We remember him piloting his plane, traveling wherever his cause took him; flying at night in the years when courage and stealth were required just to speak to one's enemies; soaring in the sunlight above Jerusalem when the peace he forged with Israel made that possible again.

He once said, "The beauty of flying high in the skies will always, to me, symbolize freedom." King Hussein lived his life on a higher plane, with the aviator's gift of seeing beyond the low-flying obstacles of hatred and mistrust that heartbreak and loss place in all our paths. He spent his life fighting for the dignified aspirations of his people and all Arab people. He worked all his life to build friendship between the Jordanian and American people. He dedicated the final years of his life to the promise not only of coexistence but of partnership between the Arab world and Israel.

Indeed, he understood what must be clear now to anyone who has flown above the Middle East and seen in one panorama at sunset the lights of Amman and Tel Aviv and Damascus shining in the sky, that in the relationship among peoples who share this small, sacred corner of Earth, one thing, and only